

Colton. Lincoln instit.
To the Negroes

A Forgotten Field




"Lest We Forget!"

"Thou dost remember, Lord,
Thy help is sure
For tasks that thou hast set,
Thy heart is with
Earth's humble toilers yet."

LINCOLN INSTITUTE
OF
KENTUCKY

AT
SIMPSONVILLE ON THE MAIN RAILROAD
LINE BETWEEN LOUISVILLE
AND LEXINGTON

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Lincoln Institute of Kentucky.

"What! another advanced colored school in the South, when so much has been given for this purpose?"

Thus perhaps some may remark when first hearing of the establishment of Lincoln Institute, Kentucky. It is true that ever since the close of the civil war, which left the South so impoverished and so burdened with an illiterate and dependent Negro population, northern philanthropists have rendered generous assistance for this great need. The States south of Kentucky have had the advantage of the uplift of the colored race through the fine schools provided for them by the liberal benefactions of the friends of Negro education.

A Forgotten Field and Its Needs.

Unfortunately, perhaps because of its northerly position, these showers of blessings failed to fall upon Kentucky, although the conditions of need there were the same as in the other southern States.

Thus it has come to pass that Kentucky, except Berea College, closed to the Negroes in 1904 by hostile legislation, has been almost unaided in its educational and industrial problems resulting from the great upheaval of the rebellion.

And yet, Kentucky never seceded from the Union, and within its borders were two humble, little homes famed in fiction and in history, in connection with

slavery; the cabin where the martyred friend of the freedmen, Abraham Lincoln, was born; and "Uncle Tom's Cabin," portrayed with such forceful appeal for the cause of emancipation by the inspired genius of Mrs. Stowe.

The need in Kentucky of such a school as the great institutions which have done so much for the advance of the Negro in the farther South, cannot be exaggerated. Kentucky is not a rich State. The people who have surplus means are few. Public provision, commensurate with State funds, has been made for Negro education, but without the benevolent aid bestowed upon other southern States through all the years since the war, it is not strange that Kentucky has had no first-class school for furnishing a good academic or industrial education to colored youths, and that a low standard of grade schools prevails as the natural result of poorly trained negro teachers.

The "Courier-Journal" of Louisville, January 22, 1912, says: — "In many respects the Kentucky Negro is possessed of privileges and opportunities equal to those in other States. In one respect, however, he finds himself greatly limited. No other southern State, border or otherwise, gives him so poor educational opportunities." It was recently found that 49.2 per cent. of the colored voters of Shelby County cannot read or write.

Moreover, there is no place in Kentucky where a Negro can learn a trade properly. He is barred from the trades unions. Unable to fit himself as a carpenter, machinist or even as a brick-layer, the city offers opportunities only in minor job work. The country is

the desirable place for the majority of his race, but there is small inducement for him there since the door to sciences of soil culture, poultry raising, horticulture and dairying is not open to him.

Near Hampton Institute is a county in which 90 per cent. of the Negro farmers own their farms, mainly a result of the instruction given them in that institution. Such provision, together with trade training, should be made in Kentucky for the grandchildren of "Uncle Tom," for whom the excellent colored schools of the farther south are at too great a distance to be accessible.

Christian Colored Schools. Their High Aim and Fine Work.

It should be remembered that colored schools of the type of Lincoln Institute exert a far higher and broader influence than that of fitting their students to pass better examinations for teaching or for becoming experts in a useful trade. The great value is recognized of moral and religious training, which shall inspire them with a sense of personal responsibility to God and to their fellow men, so that wherever the graduates of the great Christian colored schools are placed they become guardians of the best interests of the community, exerting a restraining and uplifting force upon their race.

Figures and Facts.

Recently a set of statistics was carefully gathered from ten prominent colored schools of the South as to

the standing of their graduates, records of whom have been kept for many years. The result was most gratifying. In round numbers, out of the nearly 8,000 graduates of these schools, chosen at random, only one in 800 has ever been convicted of a criminal offence, making the very low percentage of .000128 for criminality. Those competent to judge of such matters say that this is a remarkable record, and that it is doubtful whether so fine a set of figures could be shown by the same number of white colleges in any given section of our country.

When educated, the Negro becomes an ally of good order. A Christian school does more to prevent lawlessness than ten times its cost spent for courts and jails. A further fact from statistics shows the effect of Christian colored schools upon the life purpose of their students. More than one hundred of the graduates of the ten schools furnishing the figures quoted above are useful ministers of the Gospel, and nearly 2,350 are teachers. The careful and earnest instruction of students in schools like Lincoln Institute is that they carry the destiny of their race, and they are sent forth having a realization of this responsibility, which is shared equally by those trained for handiwork as a means of support and those entering professions.

Local Loyalty to Lincoln Institute.

Those at a distance from any enterprise which they assist, like to know how it is regarded in its own vicinity, and what local aid is given. Generous gifts from friends in Louisville have amounted to more than

\$60,000.00 ; a large sum has also been contributed by the white people of the State outside the metropolis ; strong endorsement has been given by leading citizens of central and western Kentucky ; many pledges have been made by Negroes themselves of goodly contributions from their meager incomes. These facts show the strong foundation of local good will upon which this new and much-needed school is built.

Lincoln Institute an Outgrowth of Berea.

It is not known to all that Lincoln Institute is a daughter of Berea College, and that President Frost has given the same wise and devoted effort for its establishment which has marked his masterly leadership of Berea. President Frost continues duty as one of the Board of Trustees of the new school, and it is with pleasure that the following endorsement from him is given :—

TO FRIENDS OF SOUTHERN EDUCATION :

This is to commend to your favorable consideration Lincoln Institute of Kentucky.

This Institution is most favorably located on the main line between Kentucky's two chief cities—Louisville and Lexington—and near the center of its colored population. It has been peculiarly happy in adopting those features which have proved most serviceable in Negro education, and in securing the interest of a considerable portion of the white people of this commonwealth.

For various reasons Kentucky has been backward in the matter of Negro education and very much de-

pend upon the proper equipment and support of this new institution. It has such unusual resources, such well considered plans, and such efficient management as to make it certain that money contributed to its support will not only do good, but the greatest good possible.

Faithfully yours,

WM. GOODELL FROST.

“Man Proposes, God Disposes,” for Christian Progress.

Berea College was always handicapped as to its benefits offered to the Negroes of Kentucky, because of its distance from their zone of habitation, which is in the central and western part of the State, their number being about 260,000. For this large and needy Negro population much more can be done now than if Berea's doors had remained open to colored youth, because an institution has been established easily accessible from all parts of the State, located as it is at Simpsonville, 22 miles east of Louisville. Thus the passage of the Day Law, requiring separate race education, under God's guiding power and gracious help has worked out for the greater advantage and broader opportunity of “our brother in black.”

Proofs of Permanency.

(1) The Instructors. The famous saying, “Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a student on the other would make a college,” expresses the fact that the fitness and forcefulness of the teaching staff of any

school is the foundation of its success. Proper professional preparation of the teachers is expected in any good institution of learning, but that is only part, particularly when we consider colored schools. There must be a sympathizing heart combined with a firm, guiding hand. There must be patience, coming from an understanding of the peculiar needs and conditions of the pupils. No less important is the ability to kindle and keep burning the fires of ambition, to inspire scholars to do their very best, to enjoy the thorough performance of hard work; but above all, there is essential on the part of instructors of colored youth a spirit of consecrated, Christian devotion. The writer of these pages, as an outsider, can state without hesitation that Lincoln Institute, in its Principal, Rev A. Eugene Thomson, D. D., and his assistants, has a group of expert workers who possess the above qualifications in a high degree.

Dr. Thomson was a distinguished scholar in his college days, and had he remained as teacher in his alma mater, as he might have done, he would undoubtedly have attained high rank in that profession. But his deep spiritual nature led him to dedicate his life to the ministry. He was eminently successful as a pastor, and in general evangelistic work. In 1903 he was called to the pastorate of the college church in Berea, Kentucky. From the first he became a strong factor in the work of that great institution, serving on the Board of Trustees and the Prudential Committee, besides his pastoral duties.

After the passage of the Day Law, Dr. Thomson gave invaluable aid in the establishment of Lincoln

Institute, and when the time came for its organization, the colored people of Kentucky, with one accord, urged his eminent fitness for the principalship of the new school. To give up his beloved work in Berea, called for no small sacrifice, and it was only after long and prayerful consideration that Dr. Thomson's deep sense of duty led him to respond affirmatively to the unanimous vote of the Trustees of the Institute making him its first Principal. The rest of the working force has been selected with the same care which marked the choosing of the Principal, and is divided between the races.

(2) Trustees. The same wise management which has commended Berea College to discriminating philanthropists has marked the plans of Lincoln Institute. The Board is composed of twenty-one Trustees, well known men of affairs in professional and business life, from different sections of the country, together with equally prominent local representatives of both races.

By order of the Trustees, the books of Lincoln Institute are annually audited by a professional accountant and a Prudential Committee supervises its affairs between its Trustee meetings.

(3) Further Equipment. A working outfit of well constructed and sightly buildings; a large tract of excellent land; equipment in part for industrial training and a body of earnest and able students who are the best selected from numerous applicants; these facts briefly outline the guarantee of good faith for benefactors who bestow their charities by the careful exercise of "consecrated common sense."

Lincoln Institute Provides Practical Education for the Real Needs of the Negro.

The best is none too good for the Negroes in view of their oppression for years in this civilized land, but the best education for them must meet their special needs and conditions. Lincoln Institute stands for the fullest, largest possible training for the Negro and hopes some time to be a great university. It will, however, begin with the practical task of present needs, that of giving him the mental training which will enlarge his view of life and his ability to command respect, and also fit him for some trade or profession by which he can support his family and attain the higher ideals whose value he will have learned.

A Three-fold Purpose and Plan.

Lincoln Institute has a three-fold purpose and plan, viz: to fit teachers for the colored grade schools in its normal department; to give to all students a thorough training in some useful trade in its industrial department; and to add to this a course in practical, fundamental studies in its academic department. Thus, with trained minds and skillful hands the colored youth will become self-reliant, intelligent and useful citizens, able to establish for themselves happy, Christian homes and to add to the welfare and prosperity of the country.

Does Lincoln Institute Need Money? Special Needs.

Well worthy of quotation is an aphorism of Dr. Thomson's:—"A great institution can be as poor as a small one. Poverty is not having sufficient means to do one's work properly."

There are three lines of special need just now for Lincoln Institute.

The first is of money for "current expense." Though the Institution has an endowment, it will supply not more than half the money needed for support of the school. Student fees are made as low as possible, and will give little help. The first year will bring a thousand unexpected demands for money in providing equipment which had not been and could not be foreseen, and in new but necessary expenses to give the school its highest efficiency. A debt had to be incurred in order to build the great plant, and interest will accrue on this. In order to furnish the best educational opportunities, teachers of high training have been secured and must be paid. *The Institute must first live.* For this ten thousand dollars is needed this year outside of ordinary income.

SECOND. *A building debt of forty thousand dollars has been incurred.* This was authorized by the Trustees, who saw that it would be false economy to reduce the plans any further than had already been done. The debt is smaller than was expected by the Trustees. Gifts are needed to extinguish this debt.

THIRD. *A Student Labor Fund.* Nothing is more needed with these colored students than to develop

a spirit of independence and self-reliance. It is therefore planned to furnish work to enable the more needy ones to earn their own way in full or in part. It will take them longer to get their education, but it will have benefited them more when gained. Every one of either race, seems to commend this proposition most heartily. It is doubtful if as many as ten of the students will have sufficient resources to pay their own way. Some are asking for an opportunity to work out nearly all their expenses, and the average need will be well up toward one half the year's expense. This must be largely met by labor, which, though valuable, will be unremunerative to the school, and which cannot be afforded if funds are not provided for the purpose. Profitable labor can be given to a large degree, but not to the extent required. Therefore friends must be asked to give money for the Student Labor Fund.

A Living Endowment.

Where there are ten persons who can give \$1,000 each, there are a hundred who can give \$100 each; there are two hundred who can give \$50 each, four hundred who can give \$25 each and a thousand who can give \$10 each to enable Lincoln Institute to carry on its much-needed work.

Pledges for the annual payment of a certain sum, may constitute a "living endowment," if sufficient are received. It often happens that the kindly mention of Lincoln Institute to others, by those who can make only small gifts, leads, under God's providence, to new sources of large donations. The sympathy and

intelligent interest of friends of the freedmen make contributions doubly valuable.

*School Beginning, October, 1912. Extracts
from a Letter by one of the Faculty.
The Kind of Students Lincoln
Institute is Getting.*

"We are limiting our students as to age, educational attainments and general fitness so that we have cut out a large number who would otherwise be with us. This is the better policy for the standing of the school. They are now a choice company of students and are showing a willingness to work and an enthusiasm which is very encouraging indeed.

Many letters are truly pathetic, showing hunger for education which it seems almost a crime against humanity to deny. New applications are constantly being received.

However, until the Lord raises up friends who will complete our buildings for us we must place part of these earnest young people on the waiting list."

Needy Students and Their Gratitude for Help.

Response to the right appeal made to colored youth to attain to nobler ideals in life comes heartily, and the earnest desire and self-sacrificing efforts for obtaining even a little schooling which they often display touches every sympathetic heart. This fact of appreciation should be made known to the donors to Lincoln Institute. Could they know it personally, it

would surely be gratifying, especially to the kind friends who furnish financial help in order that work may be given to poor students to pay their way. The old adage, "Heaven helps those who help themselves," in its best sense, is instilled into the minds of students in Lincoln Institute. The dignity of labor is realized as it becomes more than mere drudgery to maintain a meager existence.

One young woman came, not having enough money for her opening bills. She promised to bring the rest after a week. She will have to work her entire way because her mother is doing her utmost in sending a younger daughter to school. The older daughter is one of the promising students, and will be a leader among the girls for good. She said that she was ready to cook, sew, scrub or do anything so that she can make her way.

Two young men came from Lexington, a little more than a week before the opening of the school, in response to a call for prospective students who would help in cleaning buildings. These two showed their worth at once. They worked from early morning till late at night, and at the end of a little more than a week, one had earned sixteen dollars, and the other had done nearly as well.

Another young man came and secured work in cutting corn before the school opened. The Farm Superintendent says that he has never had a better worker. He has had very little opportunity for an education but his earnest determination is warrant for faith in his future.

Extracts from Letters of Application by Prospective Students.

The illiteracy shown in some of these letters would be amusing were it not a ground for sympathy in view of the lack of common school advantages which puts these adult colored youth educationally, on the level of little boys and girls.

Number One. "Dear Sir: This is from a young man that wishes to be a student in your school and I write this letter to learn what is the chance of getting there. I can only read and write a little and I would like the best thing in the world to learn more, but my luck was not to get any chance to learn. You can look on your pledges and see my name." (He refers to a previous gift to Lincoln Institute.)

Number Two. "Dear Sir: I got your letter and was so glad. Here is my application blank. I would have to work out my expenses if you can only let me do so. I have not got much education, but I want to study some books and learn a trade so much."

The spelling in the two foregoing letters might seem a model of some new form of Volapuk, so strangely different is it from the standards of Noah Webster. Have to, becomes "hafter," student is "stitden," chance is "chanchst," ought to, is "orto". And yet the writers have general intelligence and are excellent workers and eager to "lurne," as these letters say. They have had a glimpse of a new world, the world of books, brighter and broader than the humdrum of daily drudgery, which, when further opened to them, will lighten the hardest tasks and trials of life.

Number Three. "Dear Sir: I received your Lincoln Institute book to-day, and I can never thank you enough for sending it to me. I do want to come to your school so very bad. Can I work for my schooling? Of course I would rather work. Tell me please, just what I will have to do to come, and I will thank you so very much." This appreciation previously expressed is echoed by another young woman who said after a few days at the school, "I like it fine, I would not go home less'n some one was dead."

Number Four is from a white lady of Kentucky for a young colored girl of her acquaintance.

"Dear Sir: Having read no little of the work you are trying to do for our colored people, I am writing you in regard to a little girl of sixteen years, the only child of a colored woman who lives near me and washes for a living. Her husband is given to drink, and from him she gets no help; indeed, he is rarely at home. This mother is doing all in her power to make a good woman of her child. The girl has finished the eighth grade in our public schools, and I am hoping to have her go to Lincoln Institute. She has quiet, lady-like manners, minus 'airs.' She has a soft voice and a pleasant face, and is obedient and industrious. I am a widow, and make my living besides supporting a widowed mother past 75 years of age, or I should 'cast bread upon the waters,' and try to help this girl." Please write me if anything can be done for her." (As there is no provision for giving the initial school expenses to any student, word had to be sent that this amount must be paid before this girl could be enrolled, which has prevented her coming.)

Last, But Not Least.

"Friends of the Freedmen are asked to pray for Lincoln Institute. God never lets his children reach a place where they do not need to depend every moment upon his grace. The Institute has been brought to its present position of promise by prayer. There are, however, lions in the way despite our past success. Only prayer, constant prayer can give safety and true success. We must work as well as pray, but a pound of faith is worth a ton of confidence in man."

Pray, plan and pay;
 God will open the way;
 And all that is best
 For God's work will be blest.

To Represent Lincoln Institute.

"To whom it may concern:—

Mrs. Clara Porter Colton (Mrs. Alfred E. Colton) of 220 Center Street, Dorchester Center, Boston, Mass., is authorized to represent Lincoln Institute of Kentucky, to solicit, receive and forward pledges and money for the Institute's support.

A. EUGENE THOMSON,
 Sept. 19, 1912. *President of the Board of Trustees.*
 SIMPSONVILLE, KY."

Treasurer, Mr. Rufus A. Church, Principal, Rev. A. Eugene Thomson, D. D. Post office address, Simpsonville, Ky. Checks should be made out payable to the Treasurer. Receipts for gifts are always sent promptly to donors.

Further information and descriptive literature and "The Lincoln Institute Worker," published quarterly, will gladly be sent to all interested.





